

C.I.A. AIMS TO IMPROVE IMAGE AND 'PRODUCT'

Intelligence Analysts Are Sharing Data and Working More Closely With Outside Specialists

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WASHINGTON, May 8 — In various ways the Central Intelligence Agency is going public, partly to improve its image in the United States and partly to improve its "product," high-ranking agency officers said in interviews last week.

Agency analysts are increasingly taking part in scholarly forums, openly identifying themselves as C.I.A. representatives and sometimes presenting their own papers.

About 300 C.I.A. analysts attended academic conferences in 1977 and more are expected to do so this year. At least 30 delivered papers in 12 disciplines last year, according to Brian Latell, who is associate coordinator for academic relations and external analytical support at the agency's headquarters in Langley, Va.

Mr. Latell said in a paper he presented two months ago at the International Studies Association convention in Washington that his agency had also released more and more "intelligence products" in the last six years.

Declassified Studies Released

In the Document Expediting Project, a Library of Congress program begun in 1972, the agency gradually released declassified studies to what are called "subscribers outside of Government." Only 29 such studies were released as nonsecret in 1972, but last year 150 were released, covering estimates of Soviet and Chinese energy capabilities, dollar comparisons of Soviet and American defense activities, terrorism, nuclear energy, the global steel market, political elites and biographical compilations.

According to Mr. Latell, most of the subscribers, about 150, are university and college libraries. They have also become popular among Soviet-bloc ambassadors, who have asked Americans with access to the Library of Congress to get copies for them.

The agency also has begun a scholar-in-residence program at its headquarters overlooking the Potomac Valley.

Its first and only scholar, Prof. Myron Rush, a Cornell University political scientist, has spent the last 18 months working on analytical projects that suit both his interests and those of the C.I.A. Two more professors are expected to enter the program soon.

For several years there has also been a summer intern program that brings 40 or more graduate students from around the country to Langley to work with C.I.A. analysts. Paul V. Walsh, associate director of the agency's recently established National Foreign Assessment Center, said in an interview that some former interns

Prog. Is Very Popular

The program has become very popular and a spokesman said that the agency was turning down 10 applicants for every one it accepted.

Meanwhile, an increasing number of C.I.A. analysts have been engaged to teach part time or full time on campuses in the Washington area. Mr. Latell is taking a sabbatical leave from the agency the fall to teach a course on Latin America, his specialty, at Georgetown University. He is to hold the post of research and teaching fellow and teach a course entitled "the Revolutionary Process in Latin America."

There is a sharp departure from past practice, which he described by saying: "Until a few years ago, foreign intelligence analysts were perhaps the most obscure participants in the foreign policy process. They worked under a partial cloak of secrecy and in a bureaucratic culture that discouraged freewheeling contacts with outside specialists."

Mr. Latell and his colleague, James E. King, cautioned, however, that in turning outward the C.I.A. was not seeking undue attention. "Intelligence analysts," said Mr. Latell, perform best in the penumbra between the anonymity of the past and the glare of publicity."

Ventures Began Under Colby

The ventures into public areas began for the most part under the stewardship of William E. Colby, who became Director of Central Intelligence in the fall of 1973, when the agency was subjected to harsh criticism in the press and in Congress after disclosures of some of its more extreme covert operations.

Mr. King and Mr. Walsh acknowledged that part of the motivation for the public programs lay in efforts to put the agency's best foot forward by displaying some of its intelligence products.

But as Mr. King added, "The President is entitled to the best intelligence he can get, and while this is done largely institutionally, he should be getting it from anywhere it can be found, including outside the agency."

Mr. Walsh said that George Bush, who followed Mr. Colby in 1975 as Director and Adm. Stansfield Turner, who succeeded Mr. Bush last year, had also encouraged the movement of the agency into the open.

He remarked, however, that once an analyst had chosen, like Mr. Latell, to appear in public, he automatically "narrowed his career options" because it would be next to impossible to shift such a person over to the agency's clandestine services. In fact, he said, there is considerable movement of agency personnel between the more overt analytical branches and the covert side.

Still another innovation in the agency's public activities is the increasing engagement of outside specialists as advisers and consultants, Mr. Walsh said.

For example, the agency has set up a Military Economic Analysis Center, with a staff of economists, weapon technologists and military specialists. The center is supported by a panel of advisers from outside the agency.

Other such centers have been set up for environment and resource analysis, strategic evaluation and, as an experiment, Cuba. Each has its own group of outside consultants.